AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A method for initiating communication in real-time between ~~two~~ users in a multi-user communication environment, the method comprising:

providing a unique code generated by a multi-user communication environment to a first user in the multi-user environment during an exchange of words from a menu of predetermined words ~~communication~~ between the first user and ~~a second~~ at lease one other user, the code being transmitted by the first user to the ~~second~~ at least one other user via a mode outside of the multi-user communication environment;

~~wherein the second user initiates real-time and~~ initiating secure free form communication between the users upon the unique code being authenticated in ~~with the first user after the second user receives the unique code by submitting the code to~~ the multi-user communication environment after the unique ~~and the~~ code is ~~authenticated in~~ submitted to the multi-user communication environment by the at least one other user.

Claim 2 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the unique code is provided by the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 3 (original): The method according to claim 2, wherein the multi-user communication environment is an online multiplayer gaming environment.

Claim 4 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the code is transmitted by the first user through at least one of an email program, a telephone conversation, a handwritten note, a chat room program, direct communication, a instant message program, and a facsimile.

Claim 5 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 1, wherein the first user initiates real-time and secure communication with the ~~second~~ at least one other user after the code is authenticated in the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 6 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the code comprises a sequence of symbols.

Claim 7 (original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the code comprises a sequence of alpha-numeric symbols.

Claims 8 - 23 (canceled)

Claim 24 (Currently amended): A computer readable media having instructions for facilitating secure communication in real-time between ~~two~~ users in a multi-user communication environment, the instructions performing steps comprising:

allowing the ~~two~~ users to communicate within the multi-user communication environment by ~~selecting~~ exchanging words selected from a menu of pre-determined words;

providing a unique code generated by the multi-user communications environment to a first ~~one of the two users~~ user in the multi-user communications environment while the predetermined word communications are being exchanged between the ~~two~~ users, wherein ~~the menu fails to provide for the transmission of the unique code to the other of the two users thus requiring~~ the unique code ~~to be~~ transmitted by the first ~~one of the two users~~ user to ~~the~~ at least one other ~~of the two users~~ user is transmitted via a mode outside of the multi-user communication environment; and

allowing the ~~other of the two users to transmit~~ free form communications between the users ~~to the first one of the two users~~ upon the at least one other ~~of the two users~~ user submitting the unique code generated by the multi-user environment to the multi-user communications environment for authenticating the unique code with the multi-user communication environment.

Claim 25 (Currently amended): The computer readable media according to claim 24, wherein the unique code is a random sequence of symbols generated by the multi-user ~~communication~~ environment.

Claim 26 (Currently amended): The computer readable media according to claim 24, wherein the multi-user ~~communication~~ environment is an online multiplayer gaming environment.

Claim 27 (Currently amended): The computer readable media according to claim 24, wherein the unique code is provided in response to a request by the first one of the two users.

Claim 28 (Currently amended): The computer readable media according to claim 24, wherein the unique code is valid for a limited period of time.

Claims 29 - 43 (canceled)

Claim 44 (New): A method for initiating free form communication between a plurality of users in a multi-user gaming via an exchange of words selected from a menu of predetermined words, the method comprising:

providing a unique code generated by the multi-user gaming environment to a first user in the multi-user gaming environment during the exchange of words selected from the menu of predetermined words between the first user and at least a second user;

the first user transmitting the unique code to the at least second user via a mode outside of the multi-user gaming environment;

the at least second user receiving the unique code from the first user;

the at least second user submitting the unique code to the multi-user gaming environment for authentication; and

the environment permitting the first and at least second users to thereafter communicate via free form secure communication when the code has been authenticated by the multi-user gaming environment.

Claim 45 (New): The method of claim 44 wherein the menu of predetermined words includes a predetermined set of word commands.

Claim 46 (New): The method according to claim 44, wherein the unique code is provided in response to a request by one of the users.

Claim 47 (New): The method according to claim 44, wherein the unique code is valid only for a limited period of time.